prevalent in the market. Railways are also taking necessary steps to augment their revenue and contain operating expenses in order to increase the internal generation of resources and keep market borrowings to the minimum. Indian Railways is also seeking greater budgetary support from the Central Government.

Steam Engines

2535. SHRI AMAR PAL SINGH : Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state :

(a) the total number of steam engines in the country;

(b) the time by which these steam engines are likely to be replaced by diesel and electric engines; and

(c) the manner in which the steam engines are to be disposed of ?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN) : (a) As on 1.4. 1997, there were 75 steam locos working on Indian Railways.

(b) Steam locos are expected to be replaced by 2000 AD depending upon the availability of diesel/electric locos on Indian Railways except in some sections of tourist importance where such locos will be an attraction.

(c) Steam locos are disposed of by auction as scrap by the Railways. However, some locos are being preserved in the museums/important places.

[Translation]

Telephone Exchange in Rajasthan

2536. SHRI NARENDRA BUDANIA : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government are aware of the faults in telephone exchanges situated in Churu and Nagaur districts of Rajasthan;

(b) if so, the steps taken by the Government to improve the telephone services in these districts;

(c) whether any scheme to expand and modernise these telephone exchanges and to link more and more telephone exchanges with STD service is under consideration of the Government;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VARMA): (a) Yes, Sir. Faults in telephone exchanges are generally attended in time. But some times, due to thefts of Open Wire lines, the working of telephone exchanges get affected.

(b) Details are given in Statement-I attached

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) As per Statement II (A,B,C)

(e) Not applicable in view of (d) above.

Statement - I

Steps taken to improve telephone services in Churu and Nagaur districts in Rajasthan

1. Regular monitoring in rural and far flung exchanges is being done.

2. Two sub-divisions at Sadulpur and Sardarshahar in Churu Distt. have been recently opened.

3. Group dialing between Sujangarh (Churu) and Ladnu (Nagaur) exchange have been provided recently.

4. Connectivity between exchanges is being progressively converted to reliable media.

5. 8 channel open wire carrier system between Bidasar-Sujangarh and 3 channel system between Bimsar-Sujangarh have been provided in May, 1997 and June, 1997 respectively, which have improved the connectivity of these exchanges.

6. In Nagaur Distt. Makrana has been brought on 34 MR OFC media this year and OFC laying and dropping work is in progress for Parbatsar, Kuchaman city and Merla city.

Statement - II (A)

Tentative Expansion and Modernisation Schemes for the year 1997-98

S.No.	Name of Scheme	Churu Distt.	Nagaur Distt.
1	2	3	4
1.	DELs to be added	2800 lines	5300 lines.
2.	Net capacity to be added	3336 lines	5936 lines.